THE ACTORS REMONSTRANCE, OR COMPLAINT:

FOR

The silencing of their profession, and banishment from their severall *Play houses*.

In which is fully set downe their grievances, for their restraint; especially since Stage-playes, only of all publike recreations are prohibited; the exercise at the Beares Colledge, and the motions of Puppets being still in force and vigour.

As it was presented in the names and behalfes of all our London Comedians to the great God PHŒBUS-APOLLO, and the nine Heliconian Sisters, on the top of PERNASSUS, by one of the Masters of Requests to the MUSES, for this present month.

And published by their command in print by the Typographe Royall of the Castalian Province. 1643.

LONDON, Printed for EDW. NICKSON.
Ianuar. 24. 1643.

THE ACTORS REMONSTRANCE OR COMPLAINT:

FOR

The silencing of their profession, and banishment from their severall *lay houses.*

In which is fully set downe their grievances, for their restraint; especially since Stage-playes, only of all publiſhe recreations are prohibited; the exercise at the Beares Colledge, and the motions of Puppets being still in force and vigour.

As it was presented in the names and behalfes of all our London Comedians to the great God PROCRUS-APOLLO, and the nine Heliconian Sisters, on the top of PERNASSUS, by one of the Masters of Requests to the MUSES, for this present month.

And publiſhed by their command in print by the Typograph Royall of the Castalian Province. 1643.

LONDON, Printed for Edw. NICKSON.
Januar. 24. 1643.

The *Actors* Remonstrance or Complaint, for the silencing of their *Profession*, and banishment from their severall PLAY-HOUSES.

OPpressed with many calamities, and languishing to death under the burthen of a long and (for ought wee know) an everlasting restraint, we the *Comedians*, *Tragedians* and *Actors* of all sorts and sizes belonging to the famous private and publike Houses within the City of *London* and the Suburbs thereof, to you great *Phœbus*, and you sacred Sisters, the sole Patronesses of our distressed Calling, doe we in all humility present this our humble and lamentable complaint, by whose intercession to those powers who confined us to silence, wee hope to be restored to our pristine honour and imployment.

First, it is not unknowne to all the audience that have frequented the private Houses of *Black-Friers*, the *Cock-Pit* and *Salisbury-Court*, without austerity, wee have purged our Stages from all obscene and scurrilous jests; such as might either be guilty of corrupting the manners, or defaming the persons of any men of note in the City or Kingdome; that

wee have endevoured, as much as in us lies, to instruct one another in the true and genuine Art of acting, to represse bawling and railing, formerly in great request, and for to suite our language and action to the more gentile and naturall garbe of the times; that we have left off for our owne parts, and so have commanded our servants, to forget that ancient custome, which formerly rendred men of our quality infamous, namely, the inveigling in young Gentlemen, Merchants Factors, and Prentizes to spend their patrimonies and Masters estates upon us and our Harlots in Tavernes; we have cleane and quite given over the borrowing money at first sight of punie gallants, or praising their swords, belts and beavers, so to invite them to bestow them upon us; and to our praise be it spoken, we were for the most part very well reformed, few of us keeping, or being rather kept by our Mistresses, betooke our selves wholy to our wives; observing the matrimoniall vow of chastity, yet for all these conformities and reformations, wee were by authority (to which wee in all humility submit) restrained from the practice of our Profession; that Profession which had before maintained us in comely and convenient Equipage; some of us by it meerely being inabled to keepe Horses (though not Whores) is now condemned to a perpetuall, at least a very long temporary silence, and wee left to live upon our shifts, or the expence of our former gettings, to the great impoverishment and utter undoing of our selves, wives, children, and dependants; besides which, is of all other our extremest grievance, that Playes being put downe under the name of publike recreations; other publike recreations of farre more harmfull consequence permitted, still to stand *in statu quo prius*, namely, that Nurse of barbarisme and beastlinesse, the *Beare-Garden*, whereupon their usuall dayes those Demy-Monsters, are baited by bandogs, the Gentlemen of *Stave* and *Taile*, namely, boystrous Butchers, cutting Cobblers, hard-handed Masons and the like, rioting companions, resorting thither with as much freedome as formerly, making

king with their ſweat and crowding, a farre worſe ſtinck than the ill formed Beaſts they perſecute with their dogs and whips, Pick-pockets, which in an age are not heard of in any of our Houſes, repairing thither, and other diſturbers of the publike peace, which dare not be ſeen in our civill and well-governed Theatres, where none ute to come but the beſt of the Nobility and Gentry; and though ſome have taxed our Houſes unjuſtly for being the receptacles of Harlots, the exchanges where they meet and make their bargaines with their tranck chapmen of the Country and City, yet we may juſtly excuſe our ſelves of either knowledge or conſent in theſe lewd practices, we having no propheticke ſoules to know womens honeſty by inſtinct, nor commiſſion to examine them; and if we had, worthy were theſe wretches of *Bridewell*, that out of their owne mouthes would convince themſelves of laſciviouſneſſe: Puppit-plays, which are not ſo much valuable as the very muſique betweene each Act at ours, are ſtill up with uncontrolled allowance, witneſſe the famous motion of *Bell* and the *Dragon*, ſo frequently viſited at *Holbourne-bridge*; theſe paſſed Chriſtmas Holidayes, whither Citizens of all ſorts repaire with far more detriment to themſelves then ever did to Playes, Comedies and Tragedies being the lively repreſentations of mens actions, in which, vice is alwayes ſharply glanced at, and puniſhed, and vertue rewarded and encouraged; the moſt exact and naturall eloquence of our Engliſh language expreſſed and daily amplified; and yet for all this, we ſuffer, and are inforced, our ſelves and our dependants, to tender our complaint in dolefull manner to you great *Phœbus*, and you inſpired *Heliconian* Virgins: Firſt, our Houſe-keepers, that grew wealthy by our endevours, complaine that they are enforced to pay the grand Land-lords rents, during this long Vacation, out of their former gettings; inſtead of ten, twenty, nay, thirty ſhillings ſhares which uſed nightly to adorne and comfort with their harmonious muſique, their large and well-ſtuffed pockets, they have ſhares in nothing

with us now but our mis-fortunes; living meerly out of the ſtock, out of the intereſt and principall of their former gotten moneyes, which daily is exhauſted by the maintenance of themſelves and families.

For our ſelves, ſuch as were ſharers, are ſo impoveriſhed, that were it not for ſome ſlender helps afforded us in this time of calamitie, by our former providence, we might be enforced to act our Tragedies: our Hired-men are diſperſt, ſome turned Souldiers and Trumpetters, others deſtin'd to meaner courſes, or depending upon us, whom in courteſie wee cannot ſee want, for old acquaintance ſakes. Their friends, young Gentlemen, that uſed to feaſt and frolick with them at Tavernes, having either quitted the kin in theſe times of diſtraction, or their money having quitted them, they are aſhamed to look upon their old expenſive friends. Nay, their verie Miſtreſſes, thoſe Buxſome and Bountifull Laſſes, that uſually were enamoured on the perſons of the younger ſort of Actors, for the good cloaths they wore upon the ſtage, beleeving them really to be the perſons they did only repreſent, and quite out of ſorts themſelves, and ſo diſabled for ſupplying their poore friends neceſſities. Our Fooles, who had wont to allure and excite laughter with their very countenances, at their firſt appearance on the ſtage (hard ſhifts are better than none) are enforced, ſome of them at leaſt to maintaine themſelves, by vertue of their bables. Our boyes, ere wee ſhall have libertie to act againe, will be growne out of uſe like crackt organ-pipes, and have faces as old as our flags.

Nay, our very Doore-keepers, men and women, moſt grievouſly complaine, that by this ceſſation they are robbed of the priviledge of ſtealing from us with licence: they cannot now, as in King *Agamemnons* dayes, ſeeme to ſcratch their heads where they itch not, and drop ſhillings and half Crowne-pieces in at their collars. Our Muſike that was held ſo delectable and precious, that they ſcorned to come to a Taverne under twentie ſhillings ſalary for two houres, now

wander

wander with their Instruments under their cloaks, I meane such as have any, into all houses of good fellowship, saluting every roome where there is company, with *Will you have any musike Gentlemen?* For our Tire-men, and others that belonged formerly to our ward-robe, with the rest, they are out of service: our stock of cloaths, such as are not in tribulation for the generall use, being a sacrifice to moths. The Tobacco-men, that used to walk up and downe, selling for a penny pipe, that which was not worth twelve-pence an horse-load; Being now bound under Tapsters in Inns and Tippling houses. Nay such a terrible distresse and dissolution hath befallen us, and all those that had dependance on the stage, that it hath quite unmade our hopes of future recoverie. For some of our ablest ordinarie Poets, in stead of their annuall stipends and beneficiall second-dayes, being for meere necessitie compelled to get a living by writing contemptible penny-pamphlets, in which they have not so much as poetical licence to use any attribute of their profession; but that of *Quidlibet audendi?* and faining miraculous stories, and relations of unheard of battels. Nay, it is to be feared, that shortly some of them; (if they have not been enforced to do it already) will be incited to enter themselves into *Martin Parkers* societie, and write ballads. And what a shame this is, great *Phœbus*, and you sacred Sisters, for your owne Priests thus to be degraded of their ancient dignities. Be your selves righteous Judges, when those who formerly have sung with such elegance the acts of Kings and Potentates, charming like *Orpheus* the dull and brutish multitude, scarce a degree above stones and forrests into admiration, though not into understanding with their divine raptures, shall be by that tyrant Necessitie reduced to such abject exigents, wandring like grand children of old *Erra Paters*, those learned Almanack-makers, without any *Mæcenas* to cherish their loftie conceptions, prostituted by the mis-fortune of our silence, to inexplicable miseries, having no heavenly Calstalian Sack to actuate and informe their spirits almost confounded

confounded with ſtupiditie and coldneſſe, by their frequent drinking (and glad too they gan get it) of fulſome Ale, and hereticall Beere, as their uſuall beverage.

To conclude, this our humble complaint great *Phœbus*, and you nine ſacred Siſters, the Patroneſſes of Wit, and Protectreſſes of us poore diſrepected Comedians, if for the preſent, by your powerfull interceſſions we may be re-inveſted in our former Houſes, and ſetled in our former Calling, we ſhall for the future promiſe, never to admit into our ſixpenny-roomes thoſe unwholeſome inticing Harlots, that ſit there meerely to be taken up by Prentizes or Lawyers Clerks; nor any female of what degree ſoever, except they come lawfully with their husbands, or neere allies: the abuſes in Tobacco ſhall be reformed, none vended, not ſo much as in three-penny galleries, unleſſe of the pure *Spaniſh* leafe. For ribaldry, or any ſuch paltry ſtuffe, as may ſcandall the pious, and provoke the wicked to looſeneſſe, we will utterly expell it with the bawdy and ungracious Poets, the authors to the *Antiodes*. Finally, we ſhall hereafter ſo demeane our ſelves as none ſhall eſteeme us of the ungodly, or have cauſe to repine at our action or interludes: we will not entertaine any Comedian that ſhall ſpeake his part in a tone, as if hee did it in deriſion of ſome of the pious, but reforme all our diſorders, and amend all our amiſſes, ſo proſper us *Phœbus* and the nine *Muſes*, and be propitious to this our complaint.

FINIS.